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COLLECTION 9

8 December 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director for Research and Reports

FROM : Special Assistant to AD/IR

SUBJECT : Briefing Paper—
Agricultural Reporting Service

1. In the past year and a half there has been a reappraisal by Soviet Bloc leaders of agricultural performance plans and prospects. This necessary reappraisal was the outcome of two related characteristics of the various agricultural economies in recent times.

a. A very slow rate of growth in agricultural production that was both failing to supply raw materials to a rapidly expanding industrial sector and to provide food for an expanding population at a level to sustain the past low consumption rates, thus acting as a brake on general economic growth.

b. A recalcitrant peasantry representing the major part of the population and who are either passively resisting or openly defying the various governments' agrarian policies and constituted a potentially political threat to the Communist regimes.

2. To correct these economically stagnating and politically explosive situations, the Bloc countries, other than China, adopted a series of measures designed to effect a rapid growth in indigenous production and to correct the unrest in the countryside. Should these measures fail, then other sources of food and fiber must be found.

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